

FORCIBLE RAPE

DEFINITION

Forcible rape, as defined in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, is the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Assaults or attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force are also included; however, statutory rape (without force) and other sex offenses are excluded.

TREND		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of offenses</i>	<i>Rate per 100,000 inhabitants</i>
1998	93,144	34.5
1999	89,107	32.7
Percent change	-4.3	-5.2

The estimated 89,107 forcible rapes reported to law enforcement agencies nationwide in 1999 represented the seventh consecutive annual decrease for this offense. The 1999 forcible rape total shows a 4-percent decline from the 1998 level, a 9-percent decrease from the 1995 level, and a 13-percent drop from the 1990 level

By region, the South, the Nation's most populous region, recorded the highest portion of forcible rapes, 39 percent. The Midwest and West accounted for 25 and 23 percent, respectively, and the Northeast, 13 percent. Two-year trends for forcible rapes indicated 5-percent decreases in both the Northeast and Midwest, a 4-percent decline in the South, and a 3-percent decrease in the West. (See Tables 3 and 4.)

According to monthly distribution figures, the highest number of forcible rapes occurred in July. The lowest number was reported during the month of December. (See Table 2.18.)

Table 2.18

Forcible Rape by Month

Percent distribution, 1995-1999

Month	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
January	7.7	7.9	7.9	7.9	8.2
February	7.1	7.9	7.0	7.4	7.3
March	8.5	8.1	8.0	8.6	8.2
April	8.0	8.1	8.2	8.2	8.1
May	8.9	9.0	9.1	8.8	8.7
June	8.5	8.8	9.5	8.7	8.8
July	9.4	9.5	9.7	9.6	9.6
August	9.9	9.1	9.4	9.3	9.5
September	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.4
October	8.7	8.5	8.2	7.9	8.3
November	7.8	7.4	7.4	7.6	7.8
December	6.9	6.9	6.7	7.1	7.1

Rate

According to the Uniform Crime Reporting Program's definition, the victims of rape are always female. In 1999, an estimated 64 of every 100,000 females in the country were reported victims of forcible rape. The 1999 rate for forcible rape decreased 5 percent compared to the previous year's figures and declined 11 percent compared to the rate in 1995.

By community type, the forcible rape rate of 67 per 100,000 females recorded in the metropolitan areas represented the highest rate in the Nation. A rate of 66 per 100,000 females was recorded outside metropolitan areas, and a rate of 45 per 100,000 females was registered in rural counties. Although the metropolitan areas recorded the highest rate for forcible rape, over the past 10 years these areas experienced a 25-percent decline in rates. For the same 10-year timeframe, cities outside metropolitan areas and rural counties experienced increases of 3 percent and 2 percent, respectively.

Of the four regions, the rate of 70 rapes per 100,000 females reported by the Southern States was the highest. Rates of 68 in the Midwestern States, 66 in the Western States, and 44 in the Northeastern States followed. Each of the regions experienced rate declines when compared to the 1998 figures. Rates in the South decreased 6 percent and in the Northeast, Midwest, and West rates fell 5 percent.

Over the last 10 years, all four regions have experienced declines in female forcible rape. The West reported a 24-percent decrease. The Northeast and the South demonstrated decreases of 21 and 20 percent, respectively. The Midwest reported a decline of 18 percent.

Nature

Rapes by force accounted for 89 percent of the total rapes in 1999. The remaining 11 percent were accounted for by attempts or assaults to commit forcible rape. Compared to the 1998 volume, the number of rapes by force in 1999 decreased by 6 percent. An 8-percent decrease in attempts to rape was noted nationwide.

Law Enforcement Response

Overall, law enforcement cleared 49 percent of the forcible rapes reported in 1999. Fifty percent of rapes reported in both suburban counties and rural counties were cleared. Collectively, cities reported a clearance rate of 49 percent. (See Table 25.)

Regionally, 1999 forcible rape clearance rates were 53 percent in the South, 52 percent in the Northeast, and 45 percent in both the Midwest and the West. (See Table 26.)

Juveniles (persons under 18 years of age) were involved in 12 percent of the total clearances for forcible rape nationwide. The percentage of juvenile involvement varied by community type, with 11 percent of clearances in the Nation's cities collectively. Rural counties experienced the greatest juvenile involvement, 16 percent, and suburban counties experienced 12 percent. (See Table 28.)

In 1999, law enforcement across the country arrested an estimated 28,830 persons for forcible rape. Of those arrested, 44 percent were under age 25 and 61 percent were white. (See Tables 29, 41, and 43.)

Compared to figures from 1998, an 8-percent decrease in the national arrest total for forcible rape was recorded in 1999. Arrests for forcible rape in both suburban and rural counties as well as the Nation's cities collectively, also declined by 8 percent. (See Tables 36, 44, 50, and 56.)

Figure 2.8

Forcible Rape
Percent Change
from 1995

